Berkshire
with the
Wild Flowers

Mamie - Boy Scout Uniform

Mamie Brun - [illegible]

[illegible] flowers [illegible]

when she was little

in Berkeley.

Dec 25th 1879.

San Francisco.

IN BERKSHIRE

WITH THE

WILD FLOWERS

BERKSHIRE
WILD FLOWERS

IN BERKSHIRE

WITH THE

WILD FLOWERS

BY

ELAINE AND DORA READ GOODALE
AUTHORS OF "APPLE BLOSSOMS"

ILLUSTRATED BY

W. HAMILTON GIBSON

NEW YORK
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ERRATUM.

The illustration on page 37, through a misunderstanding on the part of the artist, represents the *avena sativa* instead of the *uvularia sessilifolia* of the poem. The design is, however, so graceful and attractive in itself, that it has been decided not to cancel it.

O STRANGE sweet season of up-heaving birth,
O oft-returning miracle of grace,
To whose eternal forces still we trace
Life's yearly ebb and flow, the newest joy of earth!

No weight of ages on her swelling breast
Can dull the keen delight of opening Spring;
Fresh from a living hope the blue-birds sing,
The wild March winds wake still a chord of deep unrest.

The pulse of being mounting high and higher,
Life throbs anew at every bosom's core,—
We give ourselves to Nature's arms once more,
And yield to her control our unfulfilled desire!

Lo! wind and rain are striving in her voice,
She bares her bosom to the ardent sun,
And we must feel her victories lost and won
Ere in her riper gains our eager hearts rejoice.

No idler fancy holds her serious eyes,
  No lighter feeling drains the happy hours,
  And he who stoops to reach her lowliest flowers,
Thro' reverent love alone may grasp their mysteries.

With steadfast mind we pass her threshold o'er,—
  She takes our trust, she gives us greeting warm,
  Withholds the rudeness of her sudden storm,
And casts her blossoming vines about the open door.

To us the birds their rarest meanings bring,
  The tireless winds our burdened brows caress,
  And, strangely stirred to thrilling tenderness,
We breathe in every flower the incense of the Spring.

Such would we follow thro' the varying year,
  And feel with such its lightest phase of change,—
  To Nature's deep emotions, deep and strange,
The impulse of a smile, the passion of a tear!

Lingering with few among the countless throng,
  Yet loyal to the ones that seem forgot,
  We fain would learn the secret of their lot,
And voice its hidden charm in kindred grace of song!

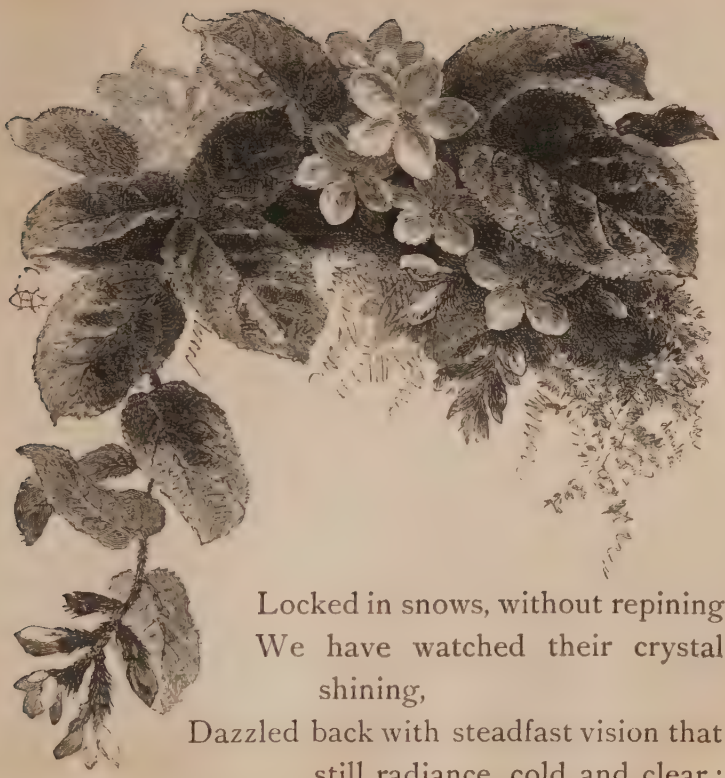
In these, perchance, no ready sequence lies,
Linked only by the season's rise and fall;
Yet thro', and over, and around them all
There flows the current strong of Time's great min-
istries.

So would we keep among these scattered flowers
A thread of graver purpose interwound,
A hint of something only to be found
Where from God's holiest heights unroll the golden
hours!

TRAILING ARBUTUS.

Since the winds of March gave outlet to the tidings they should bear,
Since the breath of inspiration swept upon the listening air,
Weeks have brought but varying chances,
Soft restraints and shy advances,
Warm desire, impetuous longing, met with tenderest delay;
Ours the restless hope and yearning,
Theirs the slow but sure returning,—
Song and sunshine, bloom and brightness, growing nearer day by day.

We have known the wrath of Winter, in his mountain fastness strong,
Driving storms have raged against us, baffled and besieged us long;



Locked in snows, without repining
We have watched their crystal shining,
Dazzled back with steadfast vision that still radiance, cold and clear;
Now we gaze with lips a-tremble,
Now we soften and dissemble,
For those same compelling forces move us with the moving year!

Thus by random fancies fettered, with what rapture
may we greet
One who shared our long probation, where the Spring
and Winter meet;
Wind and snow about her flying,
Safe her clustered buds were lying,
Folded close in russet woodlands, sheltered from the
chilly air,—
Sweet her slumbers, all unbroken
By a trifler's careless token,
Till the magic kiss of April laid her virgin passion
bare!

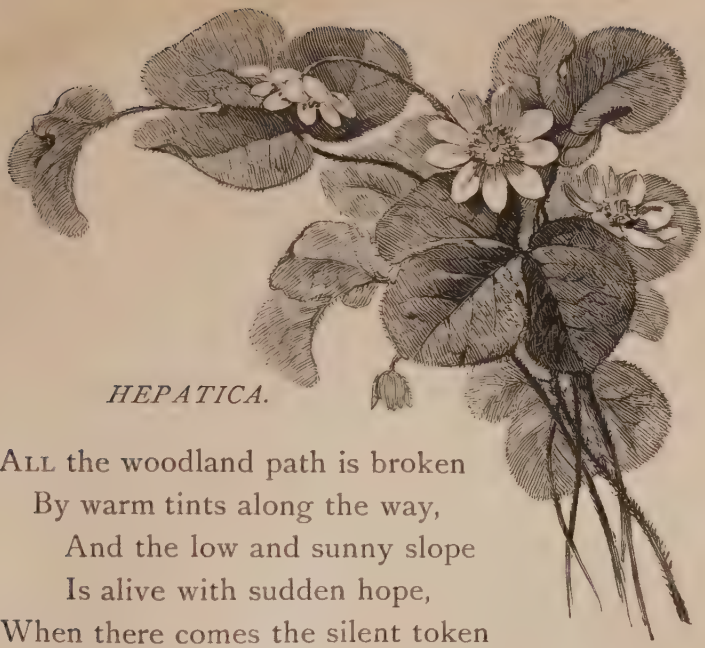
Then our darling, hid in silence where no careless
footstep trod,
Felt the earliest beams of sunlight quicken in the
yielding sod;
Half confessed her heart's undoing
At the south-wind's whispered wooing,
Heard the blue-bird's liquid warble dropping all the
woodlands thro';

While, thro' long and quiet hours,
Fell the warm unceasing showers
From a sky of tender saffron slow dissolving in the blue.

Needless doubt and pain of April, hope that baffles and eludes,
Thro' the waiting weeks she followed, patient with his changing moods;
Now the long suspense is over,
Now she turns to greet her lover,
With the soft auroral color mantling over cheek and brow;
And her dewy lips he presses,
And she thrills with light caresses,—
Shy and cold while yet unbidden, wifely chaste and tender now!

Hail the flower whose early bridal makes the festival of Spring!
Deeper far than outward meaning lies the comfort she doth bring;

From the heights of happy winning,
Gaze we back on hope's beginning,
Feel the vital strength and beauty hidden from our eyes before ;
And we know, with hearts grown stronger,
Tho' our waiting seemeth longer,
Yet, with Love's divine assurance, we should covet nothing more.



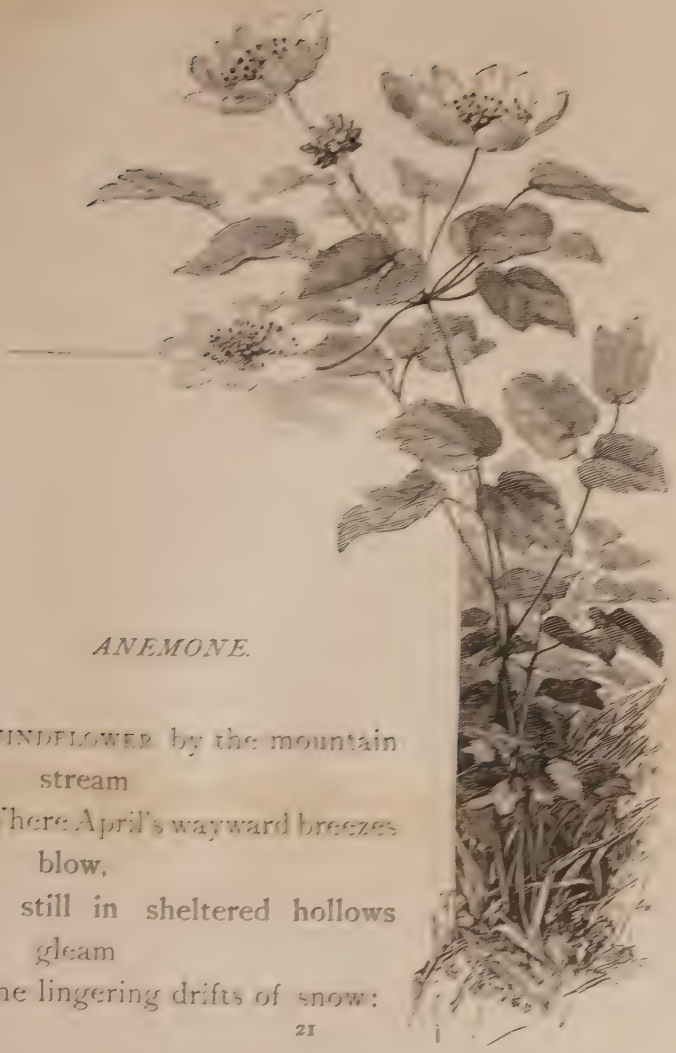
HEPATICA.

All the woodland path is broken
By warm tints along the way,
And the low and sunny slope
Is alive with sudden hope,
When there comes the silent token
Of an April day,—
Blue hepatica!

O the earth's unconscious bosom
Such rare color never knew!
All unknown to shy delay,
All unheeded by the May,
Starts to life the varying blossom,
Fed by sun and dew,—
Faint hepatica!

Come! for long has been our waiting.
Wayward impulse of the Spring,—
Longings by the March wind stirred
Have been lost through hope deferred:
You, from utter darkness breaking,
Newer light may bring,
Fair hepatica!

Clear the brook beside you singing—
Do you hear it and obey?
Does it bid you now lift up
The blue light within your cup,
All your earth-born perfume bringing
To the open day,—
Sweet hepatica?



ANEMONE.

A WINDFLOWER by the mountain stream
Where April's wayward breezes blow,
And still in sheltered hollows gleam
The lingering drifts of snow:

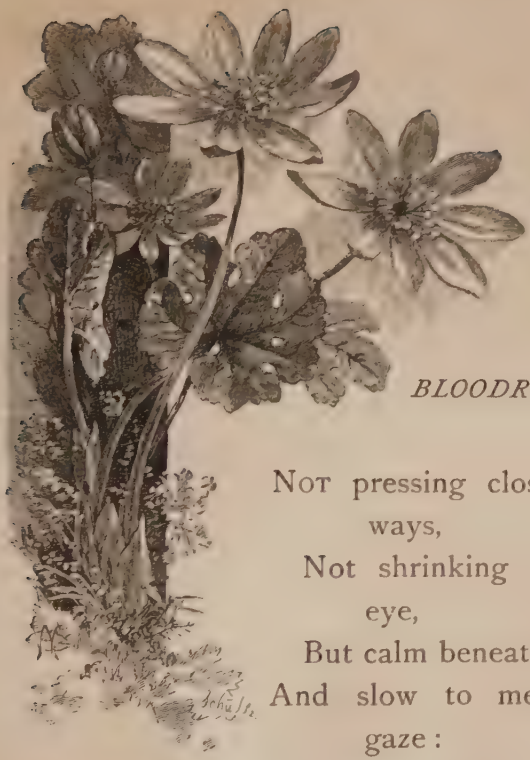
Whence art thou, frailest flower of Spring?
  Did winds of heaven give thee birth?
Too free, too airy-light a thing
  For any child of earth!

O palest of pale blossoms borne
  On timid April's virgin breast,
Hast thou no flush of passion worn,
  No mortal bond confessed?

Thou mystic spirit of the wood,
  Why that ethereal grace that seems
A vision of our actual good
  Linked with the land of dreams?

Thou didst not start from common ground,—
  So tremulous on thy slender stem;
Thy sisters may not clasp thee round
  Who art not one with them.

Thy subtle charm is strangely given.
  My fancy will not let thee be,—
Then poise not thus 'twixt earth and heaven,
  O white anemone!



BLOODROOT.

Not pressing close on crowded ways,
Not shrinking back from any eye,
But calm beneath the open sky,
And slow to meet our ruder gaze:

Scarce answering to the sudden thrill
Of doubt and mystery wafted hence,
Yet helping to a deeper sense
Of vital force unmeasured still:

BLOODROOT.

In April's hour of virgin fame
  The bloodroot gives her blossom birth,
  And trusts within the kindly earth
The hidden sources of her shame.

Along the teeming meadow-side,
  Hard by the river-banks are seen
  Her close-veined sheaths of tender green,
With generous frankness opening wide.

When lo! the secret of an hour
  By throbbing April warmth unsealed,
  In sudden splendor stands revealed
The glowing whiteness of the flower:

A pure large flower of simple mold,
  And touched with soft peculiar bloom,
  Its petals faint with strange perfume,
And in their midst a disk of gold!

O bloodroot! in thy tingling veins
  The sap of life runs cold and clear;
  I break thy shining stem, and fear
No conscious guilt, no lasting stains.

I brand with shame thy peerless brow,
  Whose golden coronet is riven,
  And cast to all the winds of heaven
Thy drifts of many-petaled snow!

Yet, ere the reckless deed appears,
  Thy truth compels my heart's disguise,
  Thy beauty pains my mortal eyes,
Thy pulse-beats hammer in my ears.

I seem myself the panting earth,
  The Spring within me newly born;
  I feel thee from my breast uptorn,—
I grapple with a larger birth.

My narrow senses downward hurled,
  In upper air I blindly grope—
  I strive to reach a living hope,
And blossom in the spirit world!

Go, struggles deep, and visions wild,
  From heart and brain I set you free;
  Thro' human need I still must see
And grasp the human undefiled.

Go, wondrous flower—thy soul is mine—
My gazing cannot do thee wrong;
To me the conscious pangs belong!
To me, at last, the right divine!

BLUE VIOLETS.

The violet blooms with every Spring,
With every Spring the breezes blow,
And once again the robins sing
A song more sweet than June can know.

So with the violet comes desire
For something else than common gain,—
The glow of more than earthly fire,
The sting of more than actual pain.

A thousand slackened memories start,
Encompassed by a violet's breath,—
The vital wish of every heart,
The Life that triumphs over Death.

A blossom of returning light,
An April flower of sun and dew;
The earth and sky, the day and night
Are melted in her depth of blue!

So comes and goes an April day,
And so the violet comes and goes,—
A few pale blossoms grace the May,
A last faint breath the May-wind blows.

But now the air is full and free
With quickening pulses of the Spring,
And longing for the life to be
The phœbes of a sudden sing.

And on a green and shaded slope
The air is stirred with sweet perfumes,
Where, in the heat and light of hope,
Again the rare blue violet blooms!

WHITE VIOLETS.

Rain above the thirsting sod,
Rain within the budding wood,
Dropping earthward, dropping ever soft and slow;
Rain its solemn chant repeating
On the hushed and darkened air,
Rain with even pulses beating
Thro' the fitful fever there;
We, who live and long for much,
Still divine its magic touch,
Drink its silver cadence still,
Open to its inmost thrill,—
Gone from us the restless pain,
Ours the blessing of the rain,
Ours the silent grace that hallows all below!

Flowers amid the dripping moss,
Tearful flowers that sweeten loss,

Pressing closer on the myriads in their train ;
White as milk, and perfume-laden,
Purple-veined and golden-eyed,—
Still with sweeter solace waiting
Where the swollen streams divide ;
We, released from strifes and cares,
Press our burning lips to theirs,
Share their mood of still delight,
Drink their unimpassioned light ;
Gone from us the fever-heats,
Ours the breath of violets,—
These we follow in the footsteps of the rain !

MEADOW RUE.

Below the slopes of tender green,
  Starred thick with pale forget-me-nots,
Below the hedge-row's milk-white bloom,
Where bees hum deep in faint perfume,
The brook winds in and out between
  Its grassy knolls and alder-knots;
There dewy stillness cools the aching brow,
  There restful shade shuts out the random day:
Sweet refuge from the virginal overflow,
    The blossomed grace of May!

'Tis there a modest floweret grows,
  Whose lightest touch renews the place;
With drooping leaves, but half unrolled,
And tasselled fringe of tawny gold,
O'er all the shady bank she throws
  A wilder charm, a fresher grace;

Adown the steep in careless freedom flung,
  Caught up with wandering fringes, loose and cool,
And left the dripping, deep-green moss among,
    Beside some quiet pool.

Now circled by the dizzying tide,
  And wet with drift of blinding spray;
Now on the sloping turf reclined,
And stirred by breezes soft and kind;
Now half-way up the jagged side
  Of cliffs that break the narrow way;—
Hers is a native lightness, fine and free,
  A grave and quiet beauty, fitting best,
A sylvan charm of frank simplicity,
    And most, a sense of rest.

When emerald slopes are drowned in song,
  When weary grows the unclouded blue,
When warm winds sink in billowy bloom,
And flood you with a faint perfume,
One moment leave the rapturous throng
  To seek the haunts of meadow rue!

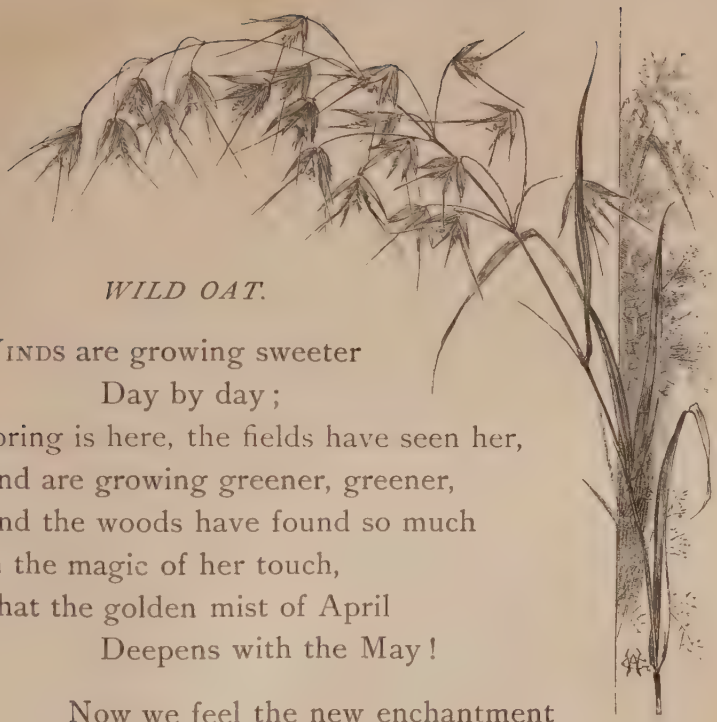
There dewy stillness cools the aching brow.
There grateful shade shuts out the oppressive day;
Sweet refuge from the sensuous overflow,
The wanton grace of May!

TRILLIUM.

WHERE the landlocked wind-storm rages,
Rushing thro' the wild ravine,
Where the gathered dust of ages
Is renewed in tenderest green;
Where the passionate pulse of power
Beats along its strong career,
You may find a three-cleft flower
In the spring-time of the year!

Winter winds thro' mountain passes
  Break athwart the frosty night;
Spring among the seething grasses
  Stirs a newer pulse of light;
Sweet and strange the April weather,—
  Generous she of heart and hand,
Sun and storm she brings together,
  Strong to conquer and command.

Now about the rugged places
  And along the ruined way,
Light and free in sudden graces
  Comes the careless tread of May,—
Born of tempest, wrought in power,
  Stirred by sudden hope and fear,
You may find a mystic flower
  In the spring-time of the year!



WILD OAT.

WINDS are growing sweeter
Day by day;
Spring is here, the fields have seen her,
And are growing greener, greener,
And the woods have found so much
In the magic of her touch,
That the golden mist of April
Deepens with the May!

Now we feel the new enchantment
Of the May;
April days were less than living,
Ours the asking, hers the giving,—
In the golden May-tide weather
We can ask and give together,
Now no more we wait and listen
Day by day.

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* See erratum, page 9.

To the green and sunlit forest,
Late so gray,
Come the careless robins daily,
There to call and carol gayly,
And the chime of blossom-bells
Fuller harmony foretells,
In the borders of the forest
Ringing in the May!

Waits the flower amid her shadows
All the day,
And the slender birch-tree glistens
Where she droops her head and listens,
And her footprints I discover
Where the sweet-fern closes over,
Round the edges of the woodlands,
Tender with the May!

O the lights of earth and heaven,
Growing day by day;
O the winds among the grasses,—
Showers, along the mountain passes;
O the shy, straw-colored bell
In the shadow of the dell,
Heir to all the early freedom
Of the May!

COLUMBINE.

Sprung in a cleft of the wayside steep,
And saucily nodding, flushing deep,
  With her airy tropic bells aglow,—
Bold and careless, yet wondrous light,
And swung into poise on the stony height,
  Like a challenge flung to the world below !

Skirting the rocks at the forest edge
With a running flame from ledge to ledge.
Or swaying deeper in shadowy glooms,
A smoldering fire in her dusky blooms;
Bronzed and molded by wind and sun,
Maddening, gladdening every one
With a gypsy beauty full and fine.—
A health to the crimson columbine!

BLUE-EYED GRASS.

In the blind meadow, overflowing
With sweet, new life in every place,
Where ferns and lightest grasses growing
Mingle in one harmonious grace;
O deeper than all conscious being
Still throbs the quickened pulse of Air,
For something lies beyond the seeing,
Divinely fair!

Low down among the daisies lying,
Near to the great warm heart of Earth,
My secret clue eludes the trying,
Merged in a new and larger birth;
I lose myself in holy union,
I cannot stand and gaze apart,
In that unbroken, close communion
Heart learns of heart.

What impulse stirs the feathery grasses,
And dips along their wavering line?
While, as the sudden tremor passes,
Two strange, sweet eyes look up to mine!
Eyes with a more than human pleading,
So poet-deep, so maiden-shy;
Till all my soul is drowned in gazing,—
O rare blue eye!

My spirit-flower, my heaven-sent blossom,
I held your secret in my hand,
I caught and clasped you to my bosom,
I thought to see and understand:
O fatal haste! thou has undone me,
Yet, yet unsolved the mystery lies:
They closed, and shut the wonder from me,
Those deep, dark eyes!

WILD AZALEA.

O NEWEST longing, O most dear desire,
Unsatisfied, unknown!
All the broken woodland path
Little light or color hath,
Save the glory breaking in
Thro' the depth of tender green,—
We are here alone!

Whence is the sacred music of the wood,
The clear, the tireless tone?
Thro' misty ways we blindly grope
To catch the earliest signs of hope,
Sun or shade or restless wind,
Whatso pleasures we may find,—
We are here alone.

A sudden presence stirs the solemn wood,
A secret not its own,
A youthful light, an open grace,
An equal strength in every place,
And, far up the steep ascent,
Warmth and quick desire are lent
Where we wait alone!

O far away in yonder leafy copse
The wandering thrush has flown,
And close along the wooded steep
We know an influence passing deep,
The Summer light, the Summer tone,
The rare azalea makes her own,—
And we are not alone!

MOCCASIN FLOWER.

STATELY and calm the forest rears its crown
Above the eternal height,—
Wide sweeps of early color, shimmering down,
Renew its gracious might!
Along the farthest ridge tall chestnuts grow,
Mixed dark with rugged pines,
And follow all the gentler slopes below
In grand, harmonious lines.
Their slender limbs toss upward to the sky
A billowy spray of green,—
The massy oak-tree's richer canopy
Weaves ample shade between.
Alike thro' coppice warm and rocky dell
The rare azaleas press,—
Long vistas touched with rosy bloom reveal
Their truant loveliness;
Young growths with tender leafage springing light,
Crowd up on every side,

Low adown the gracious meadow, dappled close with sun and shadow,
Rounded soft by waving grasses, thro' a hundred falling lines,
Drowsy as the noontide found her, with her ample robes around her,
Summer, lost in idle musing, at her ease reclines.

Floating free in dell and hollow, ere the fleetfoot daisies follow,
Springing light where swoon the breezes, warm against her throbbing breast,
Pure and deep, yet swaying lowly to a rhythm sweet and holy,
Myriad harebells meet and tremble o'er her dreamless rest.

High above the quiet valley, where she loves to droop and dally,
All along the windy headlands, where the rock is steep and bare,

Summer stays a moment only,—leaves her kingdom
wild and lonely,
And her warm breath chills to vapor on the frosty
air.

Yet in bleak and barren places, fresh with unex-
pected graces,
Leaning over rocky ledges, tenderest glances to
bestow,
Dauntless still in time of danger, thrilling every
wayworn stranger,
Scattered harebells earn a triumph never known
below!

MOUNTAIN LAUREL.

Now comes the fullness of the year,
The flood-tide of a living joy,
When never hope admits of fear,
Nor any pleasures cloy;
From birds that stir the meadow grass,
From winds that sweep the woodland ways,
A thousand voices come and pass,
In chants of love and praise.

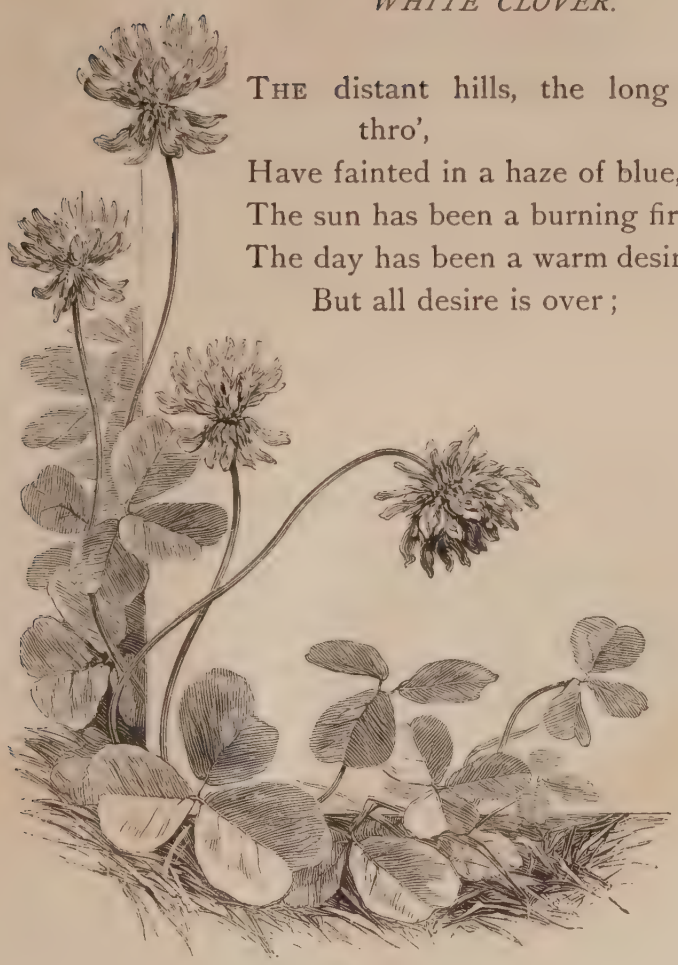
Now swells the forest, calm and wide,
In rippling waves of deepest green,
And all the rugged mountain side
Thro' billowy curves is seen;
The roadsides meet in ample shade,
With showers of light and golden glooms,
And bubbling up the rocky ways
The clustered laurel blooms.

As beauty breaks thro' graver truth,
With press of forms and flush of hues,
Her blushes, warm with conscious youth,
The shadowy darks suffuse;

The Summer owns her wide control,
  She holds it to her regal place,
Her art completes the gracious whole,
  Herself the central grace !

Each chalice holds the infinite air,
  Each rounded cluster grows a sphere ;
A twilight pale she grants us there,
  A rosier sunrise here ;
She broods above the happy earth,
  She dwells upon the enchanted days,—
A thousand voices hail her birth
  In chants of love and praise !

WHITE CLOVER.



THE distant hills, the long day thro',
Have fainted in a haze of blue,
The sun has been a burning fire,
The day has been a warm desire,—
But all desire is over;

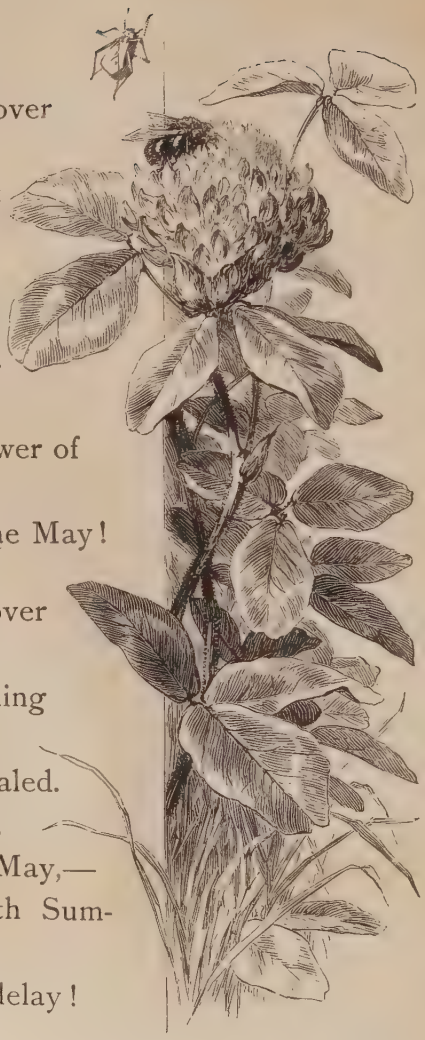
The lights are fading from the west,
The night has brought a dreamy rest,
And deep in yonder wood is heard
The sudden singing of a bird,—
While here an evening wind has stirred
A slope set thick with clover.

The fields have lost their lingering light,
The path is dusky thro' the night,—
The clover is too sweet to lose
Her fragrance with the gathering dews,—
The skies are warm above her:
The cricket pipes his song again,
The cows are waiting in the lane,
The shadows fall adown the hill,
And silent is the whippoorwill;
But thro' the summer twilight still
You smell the milk-white clover.

The glory of the day has ceased,
The moon has risen in the east,
The distant hills, the meadows near,
Are bathed in moonlight soft and clear,
That vails the landscape over;

And born of rare and strange perfume,
Pure as the clover's odorous bloom,
Dear hopes, that are but half confessed,
Dim thoughts and longings fill the breast,
Till lost again in deeper rest
Among the blossomed clover.

RED CLOVER.



Crimson clover I discover
By the garden gate,
And the bees about her hover,
But the robins wait.
Sing, robins, sing,
Sing a roundelay,—
'Tis the latest flower of Spring,
Coming with the May!

Crimson clover I discover
In the open field,
Mellow sunlight brooding over,
All her warmth revealed.
Sing, robins, sing,
'Tis no longer May,—
Fuller bloom doth Summer bring,
Ripened thro' delay!

MEADOW LILIES.

To the meadow, where the swallows
  Dip and soar the long day through,
And among the hills and hollows
  Harebells hang their cups of blue,
Comes a flower of dusky splendor,
  With a rare and queenly grace,
And a stately beauty, lent her
  By the golden August days.

Round about her birds are singing,
  Grasses nodding, with the bloom
Of the passing Summer clinging
  To each tall and slender plume;
Proud she stands, yet all unconscious
  (As a princess, strong to win),
Of the deepening shadows round her,
  And the mellow light within.

Winds across the uplands flying,
  Sink in whispers at her feet,
Murmuring in the grass, and dying
  Where her beauty stands complete;
Not to heaven her head she raises,—
  Fairest flower along the dell,—
But to meet the upturned daisies
  Low she droops her dusky bell!

Young with morning's first awaking,
  Languid thro' the burning noon,
With a warmth and fullness breaking
  Thro' the round of life and tune;
Half concealed her sumptuous beauty,
  Grave yet gracious is her mien,
In the close, oppressive stillness
  Folding all the meadow's green.

Clustered lilies in the shadows,
  Lapt in golden ease they stand,
Rarest flower in all the meadows,
  Richest flower in all the land;

Royal lilies in the sunlight,
Brave with Summer's fair array,
Drowsy thro' the evening silence,
Crown of all the August day!

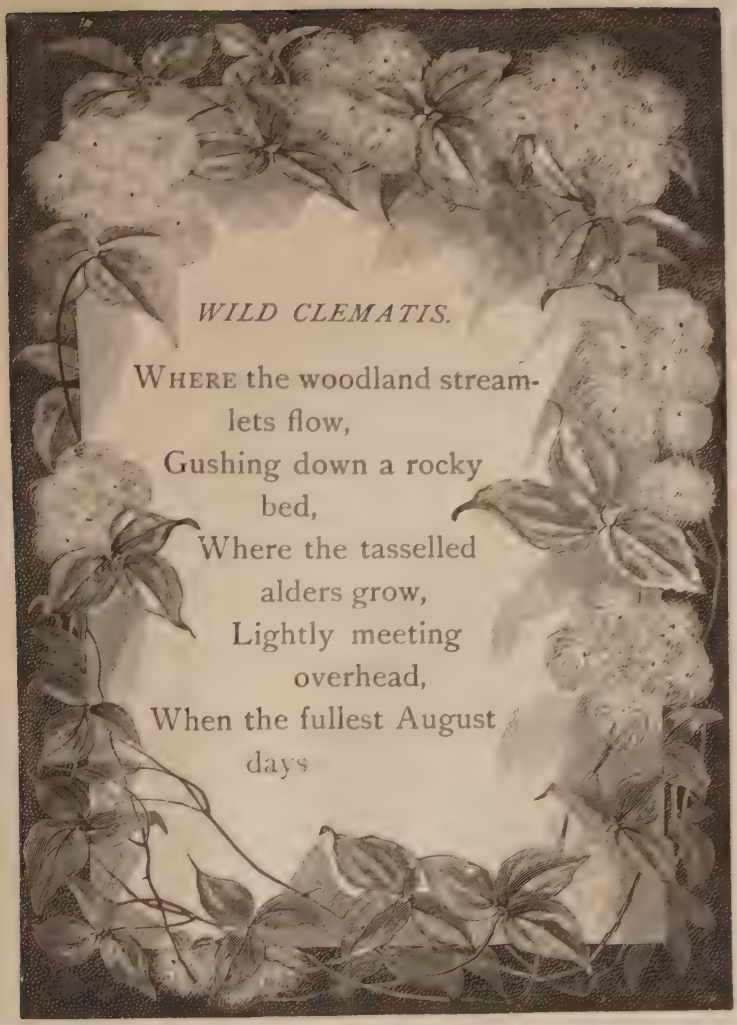
WOOD LILIES.

Thro' trellised roadway edges,
And open woodland range,
By ruined walls and hedges,
Laid low thro' endless change,
They kindle sparks of being,
Flame upward ever higher,
And break the moveless verdure
With shifting lines of fire.

The laden bee hums past them,
The wind sweeps idly by,
And higher swells above them
A dome of sapphire sky;
Each broken arch of shadow
Lies strewn in fragments there,
Each shaft of sunlight shivered
Athwart the crystal air.

O lilies, upturned lilies,
How swift their prisoned rays
To smite with fire from Heaven
The fainting August days!
Tall urns of blinding beauty,
As vestals pure they hold,—
In each a blaze of scarlet
Half blotted out with gold!

Thro' trellised roadway edges,
And open woodland range,
By ruined walls and hedges,
In every phase of change,
They lift in holy vigils
The year's unquenched desire,
And break the moveless verdure
With shifting lines of fire!



WILD CLEMATIS.

WHERE the woodland streamlets flow,
Gushing down a rocky bed,
Where the tasselled alders grow,
Lightly meeting overhead,
When the fullest August days

Give the richness that they know,
Then the wild clematis comes,
With her wealth of tangled blooms,
Reaching up and drooping low.

And her fresh leaves only shade
That which is within her bower,
Like a curtain, lightly made,
Half to hide her virgin flower;
None too close to let the wind
Find a place to breathe between,
Where the wild bee cannot miss
All the sweetness that there is,
Underneath her tent of green.

And the sunlight flickers in,
So to touch her maiden breast;
And between her twists of vine
Sings the woodbird to his nest;
And the air is wondrous sweet,
And the twilight lingers long,—
And the young birds learn to fly
In among her greenery,
And she hears their earliest song.

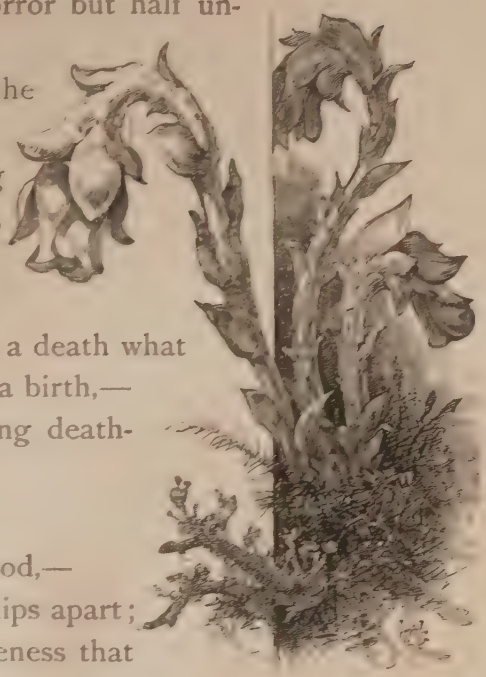
But when Autumn days are here,
  And the woods of Autumn burn,
Then her leaves are black and sere,
  Quick with early frosts to turn!
As the golden Summer dies,
  So her silky green has fled,
    And the smoky clusters rise
    As from fires of sacrifice,—
  Sacred incense to the dead!

INDIAN PIPE.

Death in the wood,—
Death, and a scent of decay;
Death, and a horror that creeps with the blood,
And stiffens the limbs to clay;
For the rains are heavy and slow,
And the leaves are shrunken and wan,
And the winds are sobbing weary and low,
And the life of the year is gone.

Death in the wood,—
Death in its fold over fold,
Death,—that I shuddered and sank where I stood,
At the touch of a hand so cold,—
At the touch of a hand so cold,
And the sight of a clay-white face,
For I saw the corse of the friend I loved,
And a hush fell over the place.

Death in the wood,—
Death, and a scent of decay,
Death, and a horror but half understood,
Where blank as the dead I lay;
What curse hung over the earth,
What woe to the tribes of men,
That we felt as a death what was made for a birth,—
And a birth sinking deathward again!



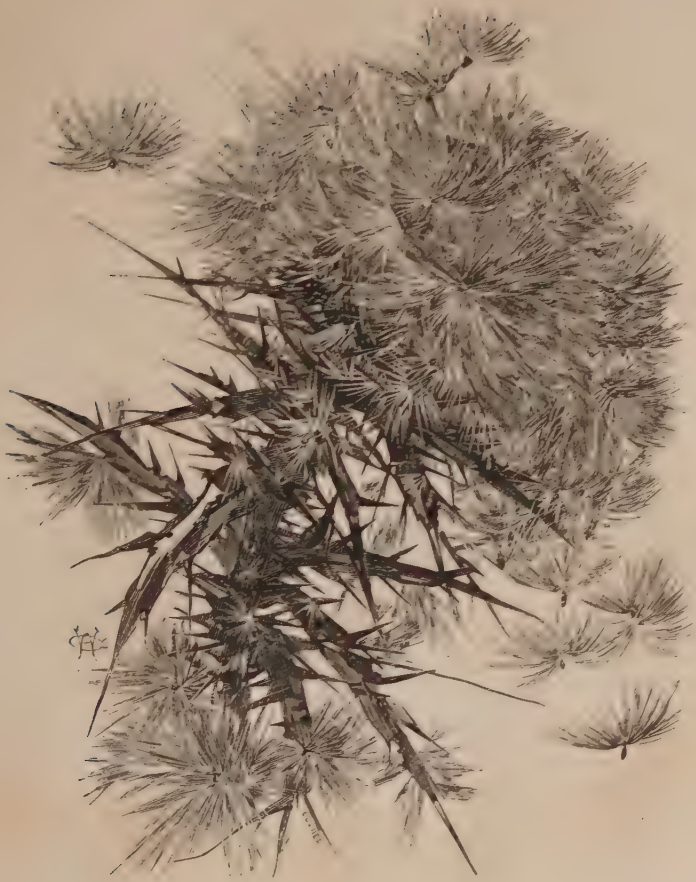
Death in the wood,—
In the death-pale lips apart;
Death in a whiteness that curdled the blood,
Now black to the very heart:
The wonder by her was formed
Who stands supreme in power;
To show that life by the spirit comes
She gave us a soulless flower!

THISTLE.

He knew her mocked by thoughtless youth,
  He knew her left to ways forlorn;
  Full well he knew the shallow scorn
  That mocks on earth the noblest born,
And blinds our eyes to deeper truth.

He sought her thro' the feverish days,
  In rocky pastures, hot and dry;
  Alone beneath the burning sky,
  He knew her deepest truth must lie
Beyond his pity or his praise.

Neglect and care to her were one,—
  She read no glance, she made no sign,
  But, safe from speech of his or mine,
  Inspired, controlled, by light divine,
Her spirit drank the eternal sun!



He soiled her not with touch profane.
Nor stabbed her with unholy eyes;
A truer instinct made him wise,
With her he shared the earth and skies,
And still forbore a nearer claim.

Outstretched beneath the absolute heaven,
Along the parching earth he lay,
Till, thro' the breathless August day,
He felt a conscious sympathy,
A subtle knowledge, subtly given.

A life intense within him grew;
His thought a second self became,
And mixt his youthful blood with flame,—
Her separate throes of passion-pain
Swept all his tingling pulses thro'!

The sun, a throbbing ball of fire
Dropped slowly down the blanching west,—
He staggered by, as one possessed,
Still dizzy with the thought unguessed,
The ache and throb of strong desire.

She flinched not from the truth revealed,
  Nor thirsted for a soul complete;
  Her being yearns with forceful heat,—
  Yet He thro' whom her heart doth beat
Hath left her lips forever sealed!

SPIREA.

A rocky path winds slowly down
Hard by the steep ravine below;
The ferns are green beside the ledge,
And light along its broken edge
The scattered daisies grow.

And yet she follows every turn
With spires of closely clustered bloom,
And all the wildness of the place,
The narrow pass, the rugged ways,
But give her larger room.

And near the unfrequented road,
By waysides scorched with barren heat,
In clouded pink or softer white
She holds the Summer's generous light,—
Our native meadow-sweet!

GOLDENROD.

When the wayside tangles blaze
  In the low September sun,
When the flowers of Summer days
  Droop and wither, one by one,
Reaching up through bush and brier,
Sumptuous brow and heart of fire,
Flaunting high its wind-rocked plume,
Brave with wealth of native bloom,—
    Goldenrod!

When the meadow, lately shorn,
  Parched and languid, swoons with pain,
When her life-blood, night and morn,
  Shrinks in every throbbing vein,
Round her fallen, tarnished urn
Leaping watch-fires brighter burn;
Royal arch o'er Autumn's gate,
Bending low with lustrous weight,—
    Goldenrod!

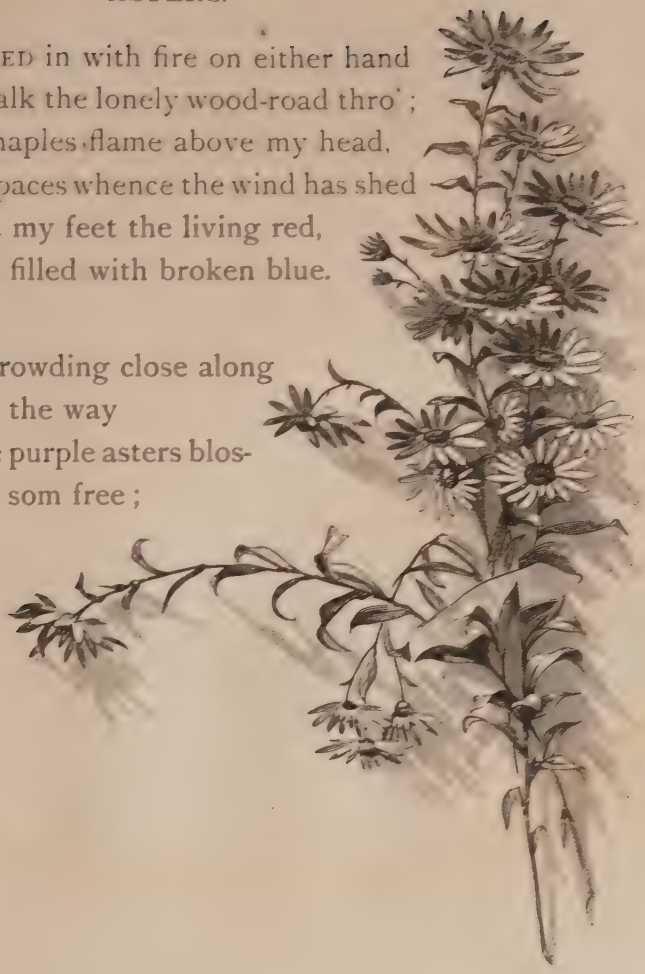
In the pasture's rude embrace,
  All o'errun with tangled vines,
Where the thistle claims its place,
  And the straggling hedge confines,
Bearing still the sweet impress
Of unfettered loveliness,
In the field and by the wall,
Binding, clasping, crowning all,—
    Goldenrod!

Nature lies disheveled, pale,
  With her feverish lips apart,—
Day by day the pulses fail,
  Nearer to her bounding heart;
Yet that slackened grasp doth hold
Store of pure and genuine gold;
Quick thou comest, strong and free,
Type of all the wealth to be,—
    Goldenrod!

ASTERS.

WALLED in with fire on either hand
I walk the lonely wood-road thro';
The maples flame above my head,
And spaces whence the wind has shed
About my feet the living red,
Are filled with broken blue.

And crowding close along
the way
The purple asters blos-
som free;



In full profusion, far and wide,
They fill the path on every side,
In loose confusion multiplied
To endless harmony!

The Autumn wood the aster knows,
The empty nest, the wind that grieves,
The sunlight breaking thro' the shade,
The squirrel chattering overhead,
The timid rabbit's lighter tread
Among the rustling leaves.

And still beside the shadowy glen
She holds the color of the skies;
Along the purpling wayside steep
She hangs her fringes passing deep,
And meadows drowned in happy sleep
Are lit by starry eyes!

CARDINAL FLOWER.

Slowly the black water gathers in
To itself a hundred folded lines;
Thro' the yellow willows at its brim
Pale and cold the waning sunlight shines,
As the Autumn color waxes dim.

To the westward burns the smoldering day,
Still and solemn, in the sunset sky;
In the purple hollows far away
Shadowy veils of early evening lie,
And the distant mountain-tops are gray.

In the stagnant pool, stirred by a breath,
All the shifting light and color lies,
In its shallows, dim with brooding death,
All the sweeping splendors of the skies
Glass themselves, and scatter light beneath.

Whence is yonder flower so strangely bright?
  Would the sunset's last reflected shine
Flame so red from that dead flush of light?
  Dark with passion is its lifted line,
Hot, alive, amid the falling night.

Still it burns intenser as I gaze,
  Till its heart-fire quickens with my own,
And when night shuts in the dusky ways
  Red and strange shine out the lights of home,
Where my flower its parting sign delays.

FRINGED GENTIAN.

Along this quiet wood-road, winding slow,
When free October ranged its sylvan ways,
And, vaulting up the terraced steep below,
Chased laughing sunbeams thro' the golden days,
In matchless beauty, tender and serene,
The gentian reigned, an undisputed queen.

One sudden break, half down the lengthening shade,
Revealed a dark-rimmed circle, still and lone,—
Her presence filled that sun-illumined glade,
She made the enchanted solitude her own;
The heavens above their watch eternal kept,
And, steeped in light, the embracing woodland slept.

Pale knots of grasses fringed the open space,
Her lifted cups passed lightly thro' and thro',—
Each chalice molded in divinest grace,
Each brimmed with pure, intense and perfect blue;
Alone, and spotless in her virgin fame,
Her life upheld the year's immortal claim.

Now wail low winds about the forest eaves,
Now life grows cold 'neath cold and dreary skies,
And rustling ankle-deep in fallen leaves,
The lone, deserted wood-path blanching lies;
Yet, pinched and wan, of youthful charm bereft,
The last forsaken gentian still is left.

A wondrous fairness hath the perfect flower,
  Serenely calm beneath a sapphire sky,
But holier far, in Autumn's wildest hour,
  The constant love that cannot wholly die;
To me her radiant youth new faith did bring,
Yet now her pallor seems a higher thing.

Thrilled by her gaze, I deem no fancy wild
  Where spirit grace outlasts the ruder clay;
For me, the Autumn's last and loveliest child
  Takes not even now her haunting charm away.
But when cold storms have stripped the snow-clad
  hill,
In finer spirit-presence lingers still!

In blackness sinks the dull November day,
With gathering night the air grows bitter chill,
While, over sodden field and leafless hill,
The wind, in sullen mood, disturbs the curtained gray.

No tardy color breaks the dreary line,
No bird note lingers in the frosty air,
The skies are blank, the earth is cold and bare,—
Hope droops her shining wings, and gives no happier sign.

Mute Sorrow broods above the lonely heath,
And folds us closer in her funeral pall;
Our sinking hearts accept the doom of all,
And still obey her word who bringeth life and death.

Yet not alone the symbols of decay,
We can but see the signs of newer birth;
Pillowed on quiet snows, the sleeping earth
Holds all her power in check, and waits the coming day!

The stately hemlocks keep their mantled green,
And front the blast with all their ancient pride;
And even the pencilled alders still abide,—
Their catkins tightly closed droop blackly o'er the stream.

O wild-wood flowers, we knew and loved you well,
Yet cannot mourn for that which is not lost,
No piercing blast, no hard relentless frost,
Can reach the inner world where you were wont to dwell!

The reigning year no absolute power can bring,
Beyond its rule our true allegiance lies;
We brave the night with glad, prophetic eyes,
And lo! returns afar our hope's immortal Spring!

The skies hang dark, the wind is sighing low,—
We calmly smile, our hearts are strong to wait;
We leave our garland safe from cruel Fate,
Laid close and warm beneath the softly falling snow.